

# Dayschools make a difference

FROM what I've seen and heard here in Jerusalem speaking to people, mainly Americans, Isi Leibler's idea to divert funds to Jewish education is extremely valid and definitely important.

Yes, I'm still a big Zionist and would work my guts out for Israel day and night. But I still strongly believe that Israel cannot stand alone in the world.

Many of the young people here have little or no Jewish education and are often quite surprised at the quantity and quality of mine. When mixing with Jewish kids from around the world it is a great asset and a source of extreme pride to be able to say that I studied 13 years in a Jewish school learning everything from Jewish law and traditions to Hebrew and modern Israel.

Many young people have come here with little Jewish background other than their family. I think this is excellent. But it does worry me a little because often they react like many Israelis who say that now we're in Israel, we don't need to be Jewish because simply being here is enough of a reminder. With the ongoing debate over the connection between religion and state this reminder could go, and then it'll be up to individuals to be Jewish and remind themselves.

As is known, the rate of assimilation in the United States is soaring and even here, despite the belief that "sending your kids to Israel increases chances of them remaining within the Jewish community," many would contentedly date and possibly marry non-Jews. Although

such Israelis represent a minority, they exist.

Don't get me wrong. Jewish education is not the only thing that can save the Jewish tradition. Furthermore, I don't think we're in that much danger yet. And there are definitely many Jewish kids that come out of non-Jewish institutions and become prominent activists in the Jewish community.

But not everyone has the determination to make the effort to do that and without family support and influence, being part of the Jewish community (even for a Jew) is extremely difficult without the background.

**Karen Winter**  
Jerusalem,  
Mount Scopus graduate,  
class of 93

## KRON'S VIEW



## JEWISH LESBIANS

I WOULD like to support the sentiments of Robert Weil (*AJN* 7/4) on the Jewish lesbians.

I know of no Jew, religious or secular, who believes that lesbianism can in any way be equated with Judaism or a Jewish lifestyle. Would those vitriolic letter writers in last week's *AJN* who preached tolerance towards the lesbians want their own children to join this alternate lifestyle? If the answer is yes, then they are to be pitied and condemned.

If the answer is no, then they agree, rather than disagree, with Mr Weil, whose letter espoused tolerance towards the lesbians, provided they choose to lead their lifestyle in private, rather than "pedal their wares in front of our children" at a family concert.

The Concert in the Park was promoted as a Jewish family event. The indisputable fact is, that as long as Jewish lesbians continue to practise their lifestyle, they will never contribute to the continuity of the Jewish family. Therefore, their presence at such a family event is an affront to all who have striven, and continue to strive, for the continuity of the Jewish people.

**Ian Mond**  
Caulfield North

THE COMPARISON Deborah Stone makes (*AJN* 7/4), which others have echoed, between the Lesbian group at Concert in the Park and Chabad, the ZYC, the Jewish Secular Humanist Society, Skif and the Liron Choir, is a very odd one indeed.

The variety of cultural, religious and ideological groups in the community provide avenues through which different members relate to their common Jewishness. How one can relate to Jewishness through being a lesbian, or for that matter through any expression of one's sexual preferences and tastes, is unclear to me.

Mind you, we could change "In One Voice" to accommodate a range of sexual preference groups. Alongside the Jewish Lesbian stall there could be the Jewish Transsexual stall, or the Jewish Wife Swap

ping Club, or the Jewish Masochists, or the Jewish Women who Prefer Toy Boys.

Presumably, at the risk of allowing the concert to become "In One Vice", we would all draw the line somewhere with such groups, no matter how hard their members worked for the community, how prominent or creative they were, or whether they were mothers, daughters, aunts or bubbeh.

The point, therefore, is not whether one is tolerant towards lesbians or homosexuals, but how is sexual preference relevant to an expression of one's Jewishness at a communal concert? It isn't. And it shouldn't be.

**Eva Bugalski**  
East Brighton

SINCE when does sending a letter to the *AJN* constitute a "hijacking and manipulation of the media?" (Robert Weil, *AJN* 21/4). He has conveniently forgotten that our letters were in response to an attack on us in a letter in defence of our right to exist, a "typical tactic of the gay lobby". A life lived with love and caring in whatever manner is a legitimate life style not a "so called life style."

When heterosexuals are willing and able to "suppress their tendencies" we may also consider suppressing our innate, God given tendencies. Or does he think that we were created by another God?

He accuses us of using "emotive catch phrases" when we merely stated the obvious fact that we are daughters, sisters, aunts etc. And as for "withdrawing our creative input" being "emotional blackmail" he has maliciously distorted the context in which this was written. What about his comparison of the lesbian stall with a pork stall — doesn't that make "sickening reading"?

Does he honestly believe that a book stall would turn children gay? We believe he speaks for the silent minority, the majority having realised — in view of evidence to the contrary — that the earth is not flat!

**Victorian Jewish Lesbian Group**  
Fairfield

## MOUNT SCOPUS

I AM sick and tired of everyone associating JAPS (Jewish Australian Princesses) with Mount Scopus College. I agree that there are some girls (and boys) at Scopus who are known for their vanity and use of fake tans. But these JAPS are a minority.

If Daniel Wolkenberg, whose article in *Generation* journal was quoted last week (*AJN* 21/4), would open his other eye he would see that these girls exist everywhere. In the public schools they are called "snobs" and, believe it or not, they even grace the grounds of Bialik, King David, Yavneh and yes, even Beth Rivkah.

Mount Scopus gives so much to the community in charity, spirit and brilliant VCE results. Therefore, one can only assume it is jealousy or ignorance of these qualities that brings the comment "Those JAPS", when Scopus is mentioned.

**Denise Goldman**  
Year 11 Mt Scopus College

## HOORAY HIMIE

I AM a 20-year-old ex-Mount Scopus collegian, as well as an avid reader of the *Jewish News*. I have noticed recently that you have added a new section to the paper, Himie Pupikstein, just above the youth notices. I would just like to say that I found this comic very witty, intelligent and amusing. Please include more of this artist's work in the future.

**Todd Kleimann**  
South Caulfield

## CORRECTION

IN OUR report on Yavneh kindergarten in last week's *Australian Jewish News* we mistakenly stated "there is a significant drop-off in enrolments" once the kindergarten children entered primary school. There is no such drop-off.

The mistake occurred because of a miscalculation by the *AJN* over kindergarten enrolment figures. In fact, although we correctly reported that there are 107 chil-

dr A thesis, *Prisoner behaviour and group activity in Nazi concentration camps, 1933-45*.

Dr Hans Lausch has provided copies of several articles, and we have also received papers from younger students whom we would very much like to encourage. For example, Nina Ash has donated *Our multicultural youth — a cross-cultural case-study of Greek and Jewish youth groups in Melbourne* and also a study of the Jews in Rome and Venice. To all these and other generous people, we extend thanks.

**Ros Collins**  
Director — Makor Jewish Community Library.

## LETTERS' POLICY

WE welcome letters to the editor. But we give preference to short letters of no more than 300 words. Letters may be cut for length, or edited for style and clarity. We only consider letters which include the sender's street address, day contact phone number, and full first name (not an initial) and surname. In common with standard newspaper practice we do not advise writers whose letters are not published.

## Pēn icillate a.

having or forming a small tuft(s); marked with streaks as of pencil or brush.



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**SHEAFFER**

# Education is also in the Jewish family

ALL THE current discussion on the mechanics and detail of Jewish education in Australia, much of it reflected in these pages over recent months, misses one vital point.

Jewish education, as indeed virtually any form of education, is provided by two partners, the school and the family, specifically the home environment created by the parents. It is not simply a matter of providing a Jewish studies syllabus which is "relevant" to today's watered down Jewish practice. What is taught in school must be reinforced in the home.

I have been involved in Jewish

education virtually all my life. My first teacher was my mother who, from the time I could grasp what was being said, taught me that when a Jew wakes up in the morning, he or she washes with *negel Vasser* and recites *Modeh Ani*; that *brachot* must be made before eating or drinking and that *Kriat Shema* was a vital part of the nightly going to bed ritual.

As I grew older and went to school and cheder, the lessons I learnt there were reinforced at home.

In my early adult years I taught in the cheder system in both Sydney and Melbourne and noted that

## VIEWPOINT

**Victor Kleerekoper**

those children from homes where Yiddishkeit and Jewish practices were reinforced had a very positive attitude to their lessons. The others found Sunday morning Cheder classes an absolute waste of time.

"If my parents can spend their Sunday morning playing tennis or sleeping in, why can't I?" was a question often asked.

Then I became a parent and had

the privilege, which I continue to have, of watching and helping my wife teach our children *Modeh Ani*, *Shema* and the *brachot*, about *Shabbat* and the *chagim*.

The younger children are in the Adass Israel Beth Yaacov School here in Melbourne where they continue their Jewish education. For our part, my wife and I do what we can to review lessons with the girls and to reinforce what they are taught at school. And we are not alone. Most parents from the school do likewise.

It is all very well for parents to spend veritable fortunes to send

their children to a dayschool to receive a Jewish education. But without the positive support of the parents at home, the school's Jewish studies curriculum must fail. Which is why, to that extent, it does indeed fail and will continue to do so.

Judaism is not just another school subject, to be taught under the heading of something called Jewish studies, but a complete way of life. The maxim for all education for Jewish continuity is summed up well in the saying: *It is not the Jews who have kept the Shabbat, but the Shabbat which has kept the Jews.*